

# Strategic Plan

of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
2010-2015



cec.org



**Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

393, rue St-Jacques Ouest, Bureau 200  
Montréal (Québec) Canada H2Y 1N9  
t (514) 350-4300 f (514) 350-4314  
info@cec.org / www.cec.org

# Strategic Plan

---

**of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
2010-2015**

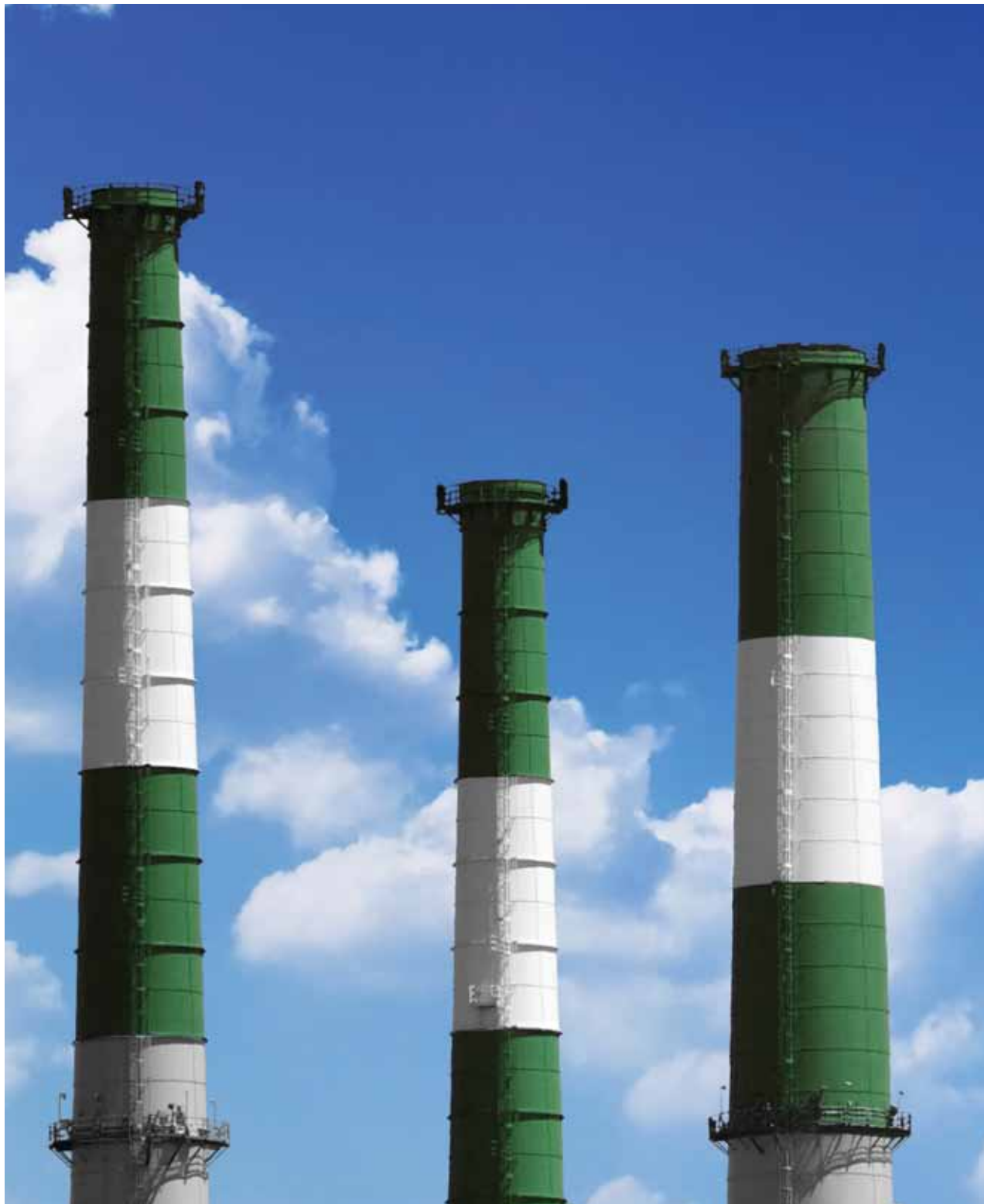
10 November 2010





# Our mission

To facilitate cooperation and public participation to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of increasing economic, trade and social links among Canada, Mexico and the United States.





# Table of Contents

<b>1. The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Who we are</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Fifteen years of cooperation</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. A vision for the future: new priorities for 2010-2015</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.1 Healthy Communities and Ecosystems</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.2 Climate Change – Low-Carbon Economy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.3 Greening the Economy in North America</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. The North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6. Evaluating progress</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>7. Citizen submission process</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8. Public participation</b>	<b>14</b>
Appendix 1. NAAEC Objectives	15
Appendix 2. Denver Statement	16
Appendix 3. Project Selection Criteria for Activities to be funded through the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)	18
Appendix 4. Project Selection Criteria for Parties' Cooperative Program	19









# 1. The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation

In North America, more than 425 million people share a rich environmental heritage ranging from tropical rain forests to arctic tundra and including deserts and wetlands, oceans and rivers, prairies and mountains. Together, these natural resources form a complex network of ecosystems that support a unique biodiversity as well as sustain our well-being and livelihoods. Although the three countries in North America have had a rich history of bilateral cooperation on the environment, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) facilitated collaboration at the trilateral level.

The NAAEC came into force at the same time as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Together, the environmental provisions of both agreements mark the determination of our three countries that economic growth and liberalization of trade would not displace ongoing cooperation and continuous improvement in the environmental performance of each country.

More specifically, the NAAEC emphasizes a collaborative approach to environmental protection that integrates ecological, economic and social factors affecting the North American environment, promotes environmental cooperation in the region and supports the effective enforcement of environmental law. The NAAEC recognizes the interrelationship between a sustainable environment and a sustainable economy and fosters both (see [Appendix 1](#) for the NAAEC objectives).

In addition to reinforcing the national obligations of each country to protect its own environment, the Parties established the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) through the NAAEC to facilitate effective cooperation on the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the North American environment. Through the unique partnership created by the NAAEC, the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States and North American civil society work together to pursue what none of the three countries could achieve on its own.

# 2.

## Who we are

The CEC is composed of:

- the *Council*, the governing body of the Commission, is composed of cabinet-level environment officials or their designees. The Council's mandate includes overseeing the implementation of the NAAEC, establishing the CEC's overall direction, approving its budget, reviewing its progress and its projects against their objectives; and overseeing the Secretariat;
- the Secretariat provides administrative, technical and operational support to the Council, its committees and working groups, and other support as the Council may direct. It also has special responsibilities in the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Process and the preparation of reports under Article 13; and
- the *Joint Public Advisory Committee* (JPAC), composed of fifteen citizens (five from each country), advises the Council on any matter within the scope of the NAAEC and can serve as a source of information for the Secretariat. The JPAC ensures active public participation and transparency in all NAAEC activities.

Committees and working groups established by Council contribute significantly to the cooperative program under the CEC. The Council will continue to receive advice from government officials, any Council-established groups or committees and others to advance the priorities described in this Strategic Plan.

The CEC Council operates on the basis of consensus, with the exception of specific instances where majority votes are called for, such as in connection with citizen submissions or Article 13 reports.

The CEC budget is US\$9 million a year, contributed equally by the three Parties. The Parties make additional contributions to the CEC through an extensive commitment of staff, time and expertise, under the various activities identified in the CEC Operational Plan. The Parties are committed to ensuring that all CEC bodies work on the principles of, transparency and accountability.



## 3. Fifteen years of cooperation

The CEC celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 2009. The Parties took note of the progress we have made in the maturity and extent of our environmental cooperation, in promoting sustainable development in the region, in strengthening environmental enforcement, in addressing the linkages between trade and environment, and in promoting public participation in regional environmental matters. We look forward to continued progress in these areas.

At the Council Session in Puebla, Mexico in 2004, the Parties established a path forward through the Puebla Declaration for 2005–2010. In 2009, at the Denver Council Session, the Parties identified a new vision based on the experience gained from the implementation of the Puebla Declaration. Furthermore, the Council recognized that the environmental challenges faced today are different from those in 2004, and committed to renew, revitalize and refocus the CEC to ensure alignment with the environmental priorities of the countries and strengthening the overall governance of the CEC (see Appendix 2 for the Denver Statement).

# 4.

## A vision for the future: new priorities for 2010–2015

In looking to increase the effectiveness and relevance of the cooperative program of the organization, the new policy direction set by Council will ensure the CEC is focused on a select few trilateral environmental priorities of North America in 2010–2015, namely:

1. Healthy Communities and Ecosystems;
2. Climate Change – Low-Carbon Economy; and
3. Greening the Economy in North America.

The Council provided direction for more focused and concerted operational plans in order to ensure a more effective use of the resources of the Commission in order to advance the critical matters on which the CEC can make a real difference. Future work programs will limit projects and programs to the three new priorities and will concentrate on those activities that will provide greater environmental results.

Moreover, to improve on the delivery of the new priorities, Council has endorsed a plan to strengthen the governance of the CEC with a view to enhance accountability, improve transparency of the Secretariat's activities, ensure alignment with Council priorities and direction, and set clear performance goals. Some of these changes focus on streamlining the CEC's cooperative work program, modernizing its citizen submission process, reprioritizing and increasing the transparency of its expenditures, and strengthening the supportive functions of the Secretariat.

Identifying the CEC's priorities is only a first step in implementing the full scope of the Council's vision for the CEC over the next five years. The Parties have defined each priority and established strategic objectives for the next five years. These definitions and strategic objectives will guide the development of operational plans that will achieve more clear and tangible results that support the environmental priorities set by Council.

The cooperative projects that constitute the operational plans will support the collective efforts of the Parties to deliver on the Council's environmental priorities. Criteria have been established to guide the Secretariat, Working Groups, Committees, and other appropriate officials of the Parties in considering cooperative activities for Council approval under biennial operational plans (see Section 6 for more information on the criteria).

The environmental and human health challenges that are the focus of our cooperative work program are both increasingly complex and rapidly evolving. As a result, more attentive and responsive guidance from the Parties, including a long-term, sustained commitment to ensure our joint efforts and resources are being appropriately invested, is required if we are to maximize our results over five years. This also means that the exact nature of the CEC's cooperative work program will evolve and be refined as existing objectives are met and new challenges emerge.



# 4.1



## Healthy Communities and Ecosystems

Canada, Mexico and the United States recognize that our wellbeing in North America—both environmental and economic—is grounded in healthy communities and ecosystems. Therefore, the Parties commit to build on and renew collaborative efforts within the CEC to protect, sustain and restore the health of people, communities and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships.

Four strategic objectives have been identified:

1. Improved environmental health of vulnerable communities in North America;
2. Increased resilience of shared ecosystems at risk;
3. Enhanced regional approach to sound management of chemicals; and
4. Strengthening Regional Environmental and Wildlife Law Enforcement.

### Strategic Objective #1: Improved environmental health of vulnerable communities in North America

Protecting and improving the environmental health of our citizens, particularly children and those in vulnerable communities, is a priority for all three Parties. To this end, we will identify opportunities to work through the CEC to advance existing commitments to support children's environmental health and to build capacity among our indigenous peoples for the protection of the environment and the health of their communities.

Recognizing that climate change could disproportionately affect some communities, the Parties also intend to strengthen existing initiatives—or create new mechanisms where needed and as appropriate—to enable community-based adaptations that could enhance resilience to impacts from climate change that affect both physical and social environments.

In support of Strategic Objective #1, the Parties could undertake the following trilateral initiatives:

- **build capacity of health professionals to address the inter-relation between health and environment**, particularly for children and other communities at risk. Possible approaches could include leveraging existing North American networks of pediatric environmental health units, supporting training and virtual networks, and evaluating best practices; and
- **build the capacity and support community projects in our indigenous and local communities** to design and implement innovative environmental protection and conservation strategies, particularly regarding natural resources (e.g., forests and wildlife), and potable water.

## Strategic Objective #2:

### Increased resilience of shared ecosystems at risk

The Parties intend to develop trilateral capacity to implement an ecosystem approach to conservation and sustainable use and monitor relevant outcomes in our shared ecosystems. The Parties also agree that attention should be given to both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

The three Parties recognize their successful work through the CEC in supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and could build on previous investments. Therefore, building on national and global activities that are already underway to develop this capacity, the Parties could focus collaborative efforts in the following areas:

- Build collaboration among multiple agencies and partners for improved management of transboundary landscapes, seascapes and watersheds. Efforts would include assessing resources, quantifying impacts, identifying thresholds, and supporting informed decision-making on a range of issues of common concern, such as sustainable management of watersheds to maximize benefits to human communities and wildlife, protecting species of common conservation concern, promote recreation, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem health, and limit the introduction of invasive species.
- Continue to build on the **list of key species and spaces of common conservation concern** and implement **conservation and management initiatives** in our shared ecosystems;
- Increase **community-level awareness, engagement and capacity** in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, through the establishment of networks with relevant actors from government, the private sector, and civil society.
- Build upon existing **monitoring systems** to assess the results of conservation and protection initiatives in our shared ecosystems.

By engaging communities in this collaborative work, over the next five years, the Parties expect to expand the number of North American communities acting as partners in conservation efforts.

Achieving and maintaining healthy communities and ecosystems requires sustained and coordinated commitment as well as planning and managing programs that will ensure their protection. We will continue strengthening our collaboration on tracking pollutant releases and transfers in North America, including the analysis of data through the CEC's publication *Taking Stock*. We will continue working together to reduce risks of exposure to toxic chemicals to the public and the environment. Similarly, strengthening the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations also serves to promote healthy communities and ecosystems. Thus, the strategic objectives identified below related to addressing chemical risks and collaboration on enforcement matters are also considered as supporting the previous strategic objectives.

In support of Strategic Objective #2, the Parties could undertake initiatives in the following priority ecosystems:

- **Atlantic Ocean Zone:** strengthen **community-based public education** to increase **public awareness of ocean conservation** challenges
- **Grasslands:** develop a **continental approach** that supports biodiversity and local communities in the grassland region by sharing best management practices to sustain biodiversity and improve economic performance of local communities.



### Strategic Objective #3:

#### **Enhanced regional approach to sound management of chemicals**

Addressing risks posed by chemicals to human health and the environment is an important element of healthy communities and ecosystems. Recognizing and building on progress made to date for a North American approach to chemicals management, the Parties could refocus and streamline efforts to deliver stronger North American results in three interrelated core areas of work:

- Establishing **compatible approaches for identifying and tracking chemicals** in commerce in North America, as a priority to establish compatible chemicals inventories in support of more coordinated and effective risk management of substances of mutual concern;
- Implementing **risk reduction strategies** to reduce the exposure of North Americans and their environments to chemicals of mutual concern; and
- Using a **regional monitoring approach** for health and environment to support risk reduction strategies, including identification of priorities, assurance of comparable data and monitoring for results.

### Strategic Objective #4:

#### **Strengthening regional environmental and wildlife law enforcement**

Enforcement is another critical component of ensuring healthy communities and ecosystems. Enforcement agencies of the three Parties intend to collaborate in a manner that should result in fewer projects and greater environmental benefits in the areas of targeted vulnerable species, wildlife parts and derivatives, non-compliant motorcycle engine imports, and the import and export of electronic waste, hazardous waste and ozone-depleting substances. These collaborative enforcement efforts could integrate (1) training relevant officials, (2) enhancing processes for information and intelligence sharing, and (3) developing technology to improve our ability to detect, intercept, and deter illegal trade in North America. The projects developed from these collaborative efforts should enhance enforcement across North America while furthering our respective domestic enforcement priorities.



# 4.2



## Climate Change – Low-Carbon Economy

Canada, Mexico and the United States recognize that incremental trilateral collaboration, consistent with our respective circumstances and capacities, brings added value to our respective efforts to address climate change and transition to a low-carbon economy. Therefore, the Parties could undertake a set of key initiatives to work towards aligning our domestic standards, regulations, and policies over the next five years (2010–2015) to support this transition in a way that is consistent with our respective national plans and priorities. Specifically, two strategic objectives have been identified:

1. Improved comparability<sup>1</sup> of emissions data, methodologies and inventories among the three North American partners; and
2. Strengthened engagement of experts and information-sharing.

### Strategic Objective #1:

### **Improved comparability of emissions data, methodologies and inventories among the three North American partners**

With a view towards providing policy-neutral options for improving comparability on the key foundational elements required to transition towards a low-carbon economy, the Parties agree to initially focus on the following initiatives, bearing in mind individual country priorities and international negotiations:

- Continued cooperation to **improve comparability of GHG emissions data** to enable the Parties to share results and strengthen capacities in the collection and management of data and methodologies for the Parties;
- An **analytical assessment** of data collected across the three parties, using the 2009 CEC *Comprehensive Assessment of North American Air Emissions Inventories and Ambient Air Monitoring Networks* assessment as a basis, and the identification of options for addressing any gaps and inconsistencies; and
- Exploration of potential common methodologies for **gathering and analyzing black carbon data**.

Undertaking such initiatives could lead to strategic results for the Parties, including:

- The key building blocks being in place to allow a more integrated approach for the three countries to address climate change and enable a low-carbon economy, including;
  - sufficient capacity, infrastructure, and systems for supporting methodologies; and
  - improved capacity to make comparisons among the three countries.

---

1. For purposes of Strategic Outcome #1, the use of the term “comparability” in the North America context refers to data gathering and analysis but not policy decision-making.



## Strategic Objective #2:

### Engagement of experts and strengthened information sharing in climate change and low-carbon economy

The Parties could facilitate engagement of experts and information sharing to address climate change and low-carbon economy issues, taking steps to identify partnerships that could contribute to additional progress. Further, the Parties could coordinate with other experts and leverage other networks outside the government.

To facilitate a broad and readily accessible mechanism for the sharing and dissemination of information among North American experts, the Parties could establish an online information-sharing platform focused on science, technologies, policies, and best practices. The system would complement existing North American and international mechanisms for sharing climate change-related information, drawing from those already provided by the three Parties to the UNFCCC, as well as experiences and lessons learned at other levels of government, as well as by academia and civil society.

Initiatives under this strategic objective could lead to strategic results for the Parties, such as:

- Mechanisms to inform decision-making by gaining expert input on climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy; and
- An improved ability to accelerate the delivery of trilateral projects and to inform decisions on future projects.

#### In support of Strategic Objective #2, initiatives to engage experts could include:

Learning from past experiences, specifically:

- national SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> cap and trade programs;
- markets and initiatives of other levels of government; and
- emissions models.

Working collaboratively to share information on:

- climate change policy options and national action plans as well as other levels of government;
- climate change regulatory developments;
- inventory and forecast methodologies;
- energy efficiency programs;
- renewable energy programs;
- life cycle analysis methodologies for fuels;
- project financing options; and
- benchmarking against related international best practices.

The online information sharing platform could include specific information on key climate change-related initiatives to support the Parties' efforts to advance comparable approaches in North America. For example:

- National programs to minimize environmental impacts of freight transport (SmartWay Transport, Fleet Smart Programs, *Transporte Limpio*); and
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation action plans of national and other levels of government.

Other groups would also benefit from these initiatives. For example, for other levels of government and civil society, these initiatives would enhance the ability of the public to access relevant information and enable citizens, communities and organizations to take their own actions to transition to a low-carbon economy.

In support of both Strategic objectives, the Parties could collectively undertake value-added focused projects that deliver GHG reductions and ancillary benefits to North America, from the hemispheric to the local level. In line with project selection criteria, the projects would be selected so as to complement, and not duplicate other bilateral and trilateral initiatives.

**The Parties could consider improving private sector environmental performance through:**

- working with priority sectors for the North American economy to share best practices and technologies, promote international exchanges among private companies and cleaner production centers, and help strengthen local capacity in these areas; and/or
- to promote energy, water and materials usage efficiency among companies that have agreed to take part in voluntary or regional clean production agreements.

## 4.3



### Greening the economy in North America

Canada, Mexico and the United States intend to focus our cooperative work through the CEC on taking positive steps towards building a North American economy that minimizes the potential negative environmental impacts of economic growth, while enhancing the competitiveness of key industrial sectors in North America.

#### Strategic Objective #1:

#### **Improved private sector environmental performance in North America**

The Parties intend to focus initially on improving the environmental performance capacity of small and medium-size enterprises by conducting activities that engage key industrial sectors and/or supply chains in activities that improve their environmental performance. The Parties recognize that successfully achieving this objective requires the active involvement of private industry in promoting the adoption of cleaner production practices and technologies, and therefore could carefully consider how to replicate successful private-sector environmental performance improvement initiatives previously conducted in the North American region.



#### The Parties could undertake work in the following key sectors:

- improving environmental performance of buildings in North America, including sharing best practices on sustainable building design and benchmarking of efficiency standards to align national approaches;
- strengthening enforcement and addressing gaps in our common knowledge on the movement of used electronics and E-waste, including the development of comparable data sets to support the mapping of legal and illegal movements of these products; and
- building on our successes in the automotive manufacturing sector, through continued efforts to green critical components of supply chains across the continent and support the ongoing recovery of this important sector.

Cleaner production activities could supplement traditional command-and-control regulation by emphasizing community participation, voluntary partnerships, technological innovation, and market-based approaches, as appropriate. The Parties anticipate simultaneously enhancing industrial competitiveness and decreasing environmental impact by increasing the use of less polluting and more efficient technologies, reducing resource consumption and waste, and preventing the generation of contaminants. The Parties could focus on opportunities that receive high-level, private-sector buy-in, serve as models for other enterprises, mobilize additional resources, and establish long-lasting partnerships between North American organizations to share best practices and enable supply-chain linkages.

Engaging experts and strengthening information and data-sharing to assess and promote private sector environmental performance in North America supports the Strategic Objective.

The Parties recognize that balanced, policy-neutral information is required for environmental sustainability. The Parties intend to focus efforts on gathering and sharing information on how to develop environmental performance metrics in an effort to better understand our shared North American environment. The Parties could also consider information exchange on expanding the use of market forces as drivers to achieve environmental improvements and promotion of environmental best practices in key industries where environmental performance and North American competitiveness are mutually beneficial. The Parties could also continue to document, analyze, and attempt to understand the environmental effects of trade liberalization in North America.

#### The Parties could undertake work in the following key sectors:

- improving environmental performance of buildings in North America, including sharing best practices on sustainable building design and benchmarking of efficiency standards to align national approaches;
- strengthening enforcement and addressing gaps in our common knowledge on the movement of used electronics and E-waste, including the development of comparable data sets to support the mapping of legal and illegal movements of these products; and
- building on our successes in the automotive manufacturing sector, through continued efforts to green critical components of supply chains across the continent and support the ongoing recovery of this important sector.

# 5.

## The North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)

In 2009, the Council set forth an ambitious agenda to change the policy direction for the CEC. Council recognized that addressing environmental problems across North America can only be accomplished by partnering and engaging extensively with stakeholders and the public in all three countries and by promoting a sense of shared responsibility and stewardship for the environment. The Parties intend to encourage innovation and flexibility and promote model environmental initiatives that will help build long-term partnerships to improve environmental conditions at the community, indigenous, local and regional levels. With this in mind, Council has directed the CEC to establish a new grant program, the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) to build partnerships at the community level which support healthy communities and ecosystems, encourage climate change activities through the transition to a low carbon economy, and advance innovative projects that could assist in the goal of greening the economies of the three Parties. NAPECA grant selection criteria have been established to ensure these projects deliver results (see Appendix 3).

# 6.

## Evaluating progress

The Council has committed to renew, revitalize and refocus the CEC to better serve the environment and citizens of our countries. A fundamental part of this commitment is the establishment of clear performance goals to assess progress in the implementation of this Strategic Plan. Performance goals will be based on the strategic objectives adopted in this Plan and on an appropriately related system of measures or indicators to be in place for Operational Plan 2011.

The Parties recognize that indicators serve the purpose of recording and sharing evidence of progress made through the cooperative activities, of the changes or improvements in institutional capacity, and on the success of the environmental protection that result from these activities, under the CEC. Indicators also serve to:

- Monitor and manage program operations, workload and resources;
- Link investment to substantive results and assess program performance; and
- Enhance accountability and report successes.



For the activities related to the priorities described therein a performance measurement framework would be developed that would utilize output and outcome measures. Outputs are activities, products and services produced by the organization or projects. Outcomes are the results of outputs and are generally divided into two categories: intermediate and final outcome. Intermediate outcomes measure progress towards a final outcome. Final outcome measures the final result that the program is designed to achieve.

A framework will be developed into a system that will provide a key management tool for examining and proving the effectiveness of CEC programs. Such a framework would also contribute to strengthening the relevance and transparency of the organization pursuant to the Council's mandate. A framework would also incorporate measurable targets for each of this Plan's strategic objectives. Furthermore, the Parties have developed criteria for the selection of projects (see Appendix 4).

## 7. Citizen submission process

The NAAEC Articles 14 and 15 provide procedures allowing any person or nongovernmental organization residing or established in North America to make submissions to the CEC Secretariat asserting "that a Party [to the NAAEC] is failing to effectively enforce its environmental law" (the *citizen submission process*). Should a submission meet admissibility criteria the CEC Secretariat then decides whether to request a response to the assertions from the concerned Party. In light of both a submission and Party response, the Secretariat may recommend to Council the preparation of a factual record. Council can instruct the Secretariat to proceed with its preparation by a two-thirds vote.

Through a unique non-adversarial fact finding process, the citizen submission process can contribute in important ways to furthering NAAEC objectives. The process seeks to ensure transparency, promote a better understanding and foster public discourse that contribute to enhancing compliance with and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

The CEC will continue to process citizen submissions in an objective, rigorous and transparent manner, with a view to ensuring timeliness and efficiency. Council has directed the CEC Secretariat to work on modernizing the citizen submission process to ensure its continued success.

# 8.

## Public participation

Public participation plays a key role in the activities of the CEC and the JPAC bears the responsibility of ensuring the engagement of various and diverse stakeholders in North America and to ensure they have access to factual, unbiased, and meaningful information on environmental issues of concern.

The Joint Public Advisory Committee will continue to lead the work of the CEC in ensuring active public participation, by providing transparent, open, and substantive forums for public dialogue among citizens concerned with trade and environment issues in North America, and in communicating the results of such dialogue and any subsequent JPAC recommendations to the CEC Council.





## Appendix

# 1 NAAEC Objectives

## Article 1: Objectives

The objectives of this Agreement are to:

- (a) foster the protection and improvement of the environment in the territories of the Parties for the well-being of present and future generations;
- (b) promote sustainable development based on cooperation and mutually supportive environmental and economic policies;
- (c) increase cooperation between the Parties to better conserve, protect, and enhance the environment, including wild flora and fauna;
- (d) support the environmental goals and objectives of the NAFTA;
- (e) avoid creating trade distortions or new trade barriers;
- (f) strengthen cooperation on the development and improvement of environmental laws, regulations, procedures, policies and practices;
- (g) enhance compliance with, and enforcement of, environmental laws and regulations;
- (h) promote transparency and public participation in the development of environmental laws, regulations and policies;
- (i) promote economically efficient and effective environmental measures; and
- (j) promote pollution prevention policies and practices.

## 2. Denver Statement

**Denver, Colorado, 24 June 2009**—We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, as Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), met for our annual Regular Session and consulted with our Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) and the public on 24 June 2009.

This Council Session marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). We have taken note of the progress we have made in the maturity and extent of our environmental cooperation, in promoting sustainable development in the region, in strengthening environmental enforcement, in addressing the linkages between trade and environment, and in promoting public participation in regional environmental matters. We look forward to continued progress in these areas.

We have also recognized that this 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary comes in the midst of one of the most serious international economic crises we have faced in decades. The environmental challenges today, our understanding of them, and the tools to deal with them, are not the same as they were fifteen, ten or even five years ago.

Canada, Mexico and the United States reaffirm their commitment to tackle environmental problems across North America. This can only be accomplished by partnering and engaging extensively with stakeholders and the public in all three countries and by promoting a sense of shared responsibility and stewardship for the environment in our region.

To this end, we committed today to renew, revitalize and refocus the CEC to better serve the environment and citizens of our countries. More specifically, we have asked our officials to return in mid-July with a proposal to examine the governance of the CEC with a view to enhance accountability, improve transparency of the Secretariat's activities, ensure alignment with Council priorities, and set clear performance goals.

We agreed on a new policy direction for the CEC to ensure it is focused on the key environmental priorities of North America, in the context of free trade and more integrated economies, and is positioned to deliver clear results.



The CEC's next Strategic Plan, for 2010–2015, will focus on a select few environmental trilateral priorities, namely:

- Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
- Climate Change – Low-Carbon Economy
- Greening the Economy in North America

To improve on the delivery of these priorities, we also agreed to several operational changes to the CEC to ensure it serves as a model of transparency and accountability, and remains an effective and relevant organization in accordance with the NAAEC. These changes will focus on streamlining the CEC's multi-million dollar annual cooperative work program, modernizing its citizen submission process, reprioritizing and increasing the transparency of its expenditures, providing clear direction to future executive directors at the start of their term, and strengthening the supportive functions of the Secretariat.

Over the course of the meeting, we also received updates from the executive director of the CEC Secretariat, Mr. Adrián Vázquez, and various working groups on recent successes of the CEC. These included steps taken to improve cooperation on North American air quality management, significant reductions in risk from mercury, a system to assess ecological conditions of marine protected areas, completion of a seamless North America-wide reporting system on industrial pollutants, more environmentally sound integrated regional supply chains, and a training program for customs and border officials to aid in combating the illegal distribution of hazardous wastes and ozone-depleting substances.

As always, we had the benefit of the considered input of our Joint Public Advisory Committee, which hosted a public workshop on climate policy coherence in North America. In keeping with our commitment to public engagement, we were also pleased to participate in a public meeting and exchange views with numerous citizens from each of our three countries on environmental issues of their choosing. We look forward to the Committee's ongoing engagement as it serves a critical role to ensure active public participation and success in our endeavor to strengthen this important trilateral organization.

In closing, we would like to thank Mr. Vázquez for his heartfelt dedication to the CEC over the past three years. With his three-year term coming to an end this summer, we will soon be launching a process to select the next executive director.

With this new vision for the CEC, we are confident that Canada, Mexico and the United States will be well positioned to tackle our shared environmental challenges of the next decade.

# 3. Project Selection Criteria for Activities to be funded through the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)

## Project Description Drafting Guidance

Canada, Mexico and the United States have each made significant investments to engage their citizens in working towards sustainability by involving them in the protection of our natural resources, in the improvement of human health and the environment and in the conservation of our ecosystems across North America. By establishing the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA), Council recognizes that ecosystems do not follow political boundaries but rather often cross borders between and among states, provinces and countries. Further, Council recognizes that the individual investments made by each country can achieve greater success if we can develop a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship for the environment across North America. Awards are intended to support a flexible and diverse set of project types, that improve access to resources provided by the Parties through the CEC for smaller more hands-on organizations and that build long-term partnerships to improve environmental conditions at the community, indigenous, local and regional levels. These project types can include, but are not limited to: building capacity, demonstrations, transfer of innovative technologies, outreach, education, sharing of best practices, train environmental leaders, reduce risks, and many other non-regulatory efforts.

- Does the project address one or more of the three priorities identified by Council as described in the current Strategic Plan? How?
- Does the submission describe the environmental significance of the project for the community? The North American region? Internationally?
- Does the submission describe a technically or scientifically sound approach that includes goals and measurable objectives? Are clear and tangible results identified? Does it include how progress is to be measured?
- Are the results proposed relevant to protecting the environment in the community? The North American region?
- Does the project propose a clear timeline for implementation of the activities, including a target end date for NAPECA support?
- Who are the partners or linkages in the community? In the North American region? Internationally? At the state, local or indigenous community level?
- If the project builds capacity, who are the beneficiaries of the capacity building activities?

### For the Parties to assess:

- Could the project benefit from collaboration with, or contribute to existing Parties projects through CEC, or to existing domestic policies, increasing the potential of the project to produce benefits for the community?



## Appendix

# 4. Project Selection Criteria for the Parties' Cooperative Work Program for the CEC

## Project Description Drafting Guidance

The goal of all projects funded by the CEC will be to support the efforts of the Parties to conserve, protect and/or enhance the North American environment. The following criteria will guide the Secretariat, Working Groups, Committees, and other appropriate officials of the Parties in considering cooperative activities for Council approval under operational plans. These selection criteria do not apply for activities to be funded through the NAPECA grant program, which are contained in Appendix 3.

- Does the project contribute to achieving Council's strategic objectives as described within the current Strategic Plan, or as related to other priorities subsequently confirmed by Council? How?
- Are the proposed objectives North American in scope? In other words, how are the proposed results relevant to protecting the environment in North America?
- Does the project identify specific clear and tangible results that will be achieved and how progress toward each result will be measured over time?
- Is the CEC the most effective vehicle for the Parties to undertake the project, considering:
  - The value-added of doing it under the CEC cooperative program
  - Any other public, private or social organizations that work on such activities
  - Opportunities to cooperate and/or leverage resources with such organizations
- Does the project propose a clear timeline for implementation of the activities, including a target end date for CEC's involvement? Where applicable, describe how the work will continue after CEC involvement ends?
- Where applicable, does the project identify with reasonable specificity:
  - Linkages with other relevant CEC projects, past or present, in order to create synergies, capitalize on experience, or avoid duplication?
- The target audience, as well as its receptivity and capacity to use the information that may be produced as a result of the project?
  - The beneficiaries of capacity building activities that the project may include?
  - The relevant stakeholders, with particular attention to communities, academia, NGOs and industry, and their involvement and contribution to a successful outcome.



**Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

393, rue St-Jacques Ouest, Bureau 200  
Montréal (Québec) Canada H2Y 1N9  
t (514) 350-4300 f (514) 350-4314  
info@cec.org / www.cec.org

